# Step 8: Decision-making

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| **Recommendation** | **Considerations and Actions** |
| The Selection Committee Chair facilitates a fair and robust decision-making process | * Selection committee members speak individually, taking turns so different members speak first * Assessment is conducted horizontally, ie, criterion by criterion, rather than applicant by applicant; all applicants against first criterion, then second criterion, then third …)[[1]](#footnote-1), [[2]](#footnote-2),   **Research**  Research has shown that gender stereotypes are more likely to occur when applicants are evaluated one at a time and against other applicants, and less likely when evaluating several applicants simultaneously, comparing them systematically against each criterion[[3]](#footnote-3), [[4]](#footnote-4)   * All members have a voice, participate fully and no information dismissed * Committee members ask questions of other members (and themselves) to justify statements and/or assumptions being made about applicants and articulating the possibility of bias * Avoid cognitive errors, biases and personal prejudice. Statements such as “a good fit”, “needs more time”, and “that’s the ways it’s always been done” need explanation as to how they relate to the criteria.   + See [Cognitive biases in recruitment](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-59686-0_9) * Evaluate missing or inconsistent information * Be willing to reassess differing viewpoints * Fairly evaluate equivalent and overseas qualifications * Allow enough time for considered decision making; bias increases when there are time and cognitive pressures[[5]](#footnote-5) * Committee agrees on assessment gaps and ensure these are included in the reference checking process * Chair provides their assessment after everyone else[[6]](#footnote-6) * If discussion results in different views about applicants, the Chair facilitates a repeat review of the applicants against the criteria * Committee knows how to apply the ‘tie-breaker’ principle if there are two similarly matched applicants and one applicant is a Māori or member of an [equity group](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about-us/about-the-university/equity-at-the-university/about-equity/what-is-equity.html). See the [Academic](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/human-resources1/recruitment--appointment-and-induction/academic-staff-recruitment--selection-and-appointment-procedures.html) (s.44) and the [Professional](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/human-resources1/recruitment--appointment-and-induction/professional-staff-recruitment--selection-and-appointment-proced.html) (S.15) staff recruitment procedures |
| Making the decision | * The final decision should be determined on the basis of all elements of the selection process (i.e. written application, referee reports, tests, presentations, and interview, assessing both quantitative and qualitative information. * Consideration of how significant strengths in some criteria may compensate for not meeting other criteria need to be fully discussed * The committee should be deliberate and apply collective judgement. Decisions must be justifiable and the committee accountable |
| Structured and standardised reference checking | * Referee reports are obtained only with the applicant’s consent. Information sought should be consistent and relevant to the role. See [Academic](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/human-resources1/recruitment--appointment-and-induction/academic-staff-recruitment--selection-and-appointment-procedures.html) and  [Professional](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/human-resources1/recruitment--appointment-and-induction/professional-staff-recruitment--selection-and-appointment-proced.html) Staff Recruitment Procedures * Use the same set of questions for each referee, constructed from gaps identified in the interview process and relevant to the selection criteria * Be aware that applicants from more privileged backgrounds or with more continuous work history may have more impressive references or referees * Note that referees also have biases and that male and female applicants with the same skills are described differently   **Research:**  Letters of recommendation for men were longer, made more reference to their CV, publications and accomplishments, and had less doubt raisers than did references for women[[7]](#footnote-7), [[8]](#footnote-8)  Recommenders used significantly more standout adjectives to describe male as compared to female candidates[[9]](#footnote-9) |
| Recommendation is transparent and accountable | * The Committee Chair/hiring manager, clearly documents (in writing) decisions and their rationale. * Document how the recommended applicant demonstrates how they best meet the criteria * Academic positions can also refer to how the recommended applicant meets the academic standards * Note if there are any dissenting opinions. |
| Negotiation is conducted fairly and free of bias | * Provide information to shortlisted applicants on whether the salary offer is negotiable * Ensure proposed salary offers are supported by evidence and the salary is justifiable, consistent with starting salaries for the role across the University, free of gender bias and reflects the full value of skills including cultural expertise, and skills gained through caring, voluntary, community work and mahi aroha   **Research:**  Evidence suggests women and Pacific applicants are less likely to negotiate salary, and women generally more likely to be offered lower salaries and negatively viewed if they negotiate[[10]](#footnote-10), [[11]](#footnote-11), [[12]](#footnote-12) |
| Review | * Chair reviews process with whole committee identifying strengths and weaknesses of the process and recommendations for future committees * Review numbers of applications by gender and ethnicity at each stage of the recruitment process and discuss any apparent issues * Review department/faculty starting salaries by gender and ethnicity |
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1. [Recruitment Guidance](https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/Workforce-and-Talent-Management/Implementing-the-Gender-Pay-Principles-and-removing-gender-bias-in-recruitment-processes.pdf) Public Service Commission 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Bohnet, I. HBR 2016](https://hbr.org/2016/04/how-to-take-the-bias-out-of-interviews), [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Bohnet, van Green, Bazerman, 2015](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251329720_When_Performance_Trumps_Gender_Bias_Joint_Versus_Separate_Evaluation) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Isaac, Lee & Carnes, 2009](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19881440/) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Kahneman, D. Thinking, Fast and Slow. 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Cognicitiy, 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Trix & Psenka. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [Madera et al 2018](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324782644_Raising_Doubt_in_Letters_of_Recommendation_for_Academia_Gender_Differences_and_Their_Impact) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [Schmader 2007](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2572075/) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://www.willistowerswatson.com/en-NZ/Insights/2017/09/Redefining-negotiation-a-social-process-in-which-we-can-all-excel> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Bowles and Badcock, 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. [Recruitment Guidance](https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/Workforce-and-Talent-Management/Implementing-the-Gender-Pay-Principles-and-removing-gender-bias-in-recruitment-processes.pdf) Public Service Commission 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)